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ON PAGE 1

# W. Germans scramble to limit spy damage



Tiedge had access to top West German secrets

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Bonn

West Germany is scrambling to limit the damage of what could be the worst spy case in its history, involving the head of Bonn's counterintelligence against East German espionage for the past four years.

Following the stunning revelation Friday that the director, Hans-Joachim Tiedge, himself was probably an East German agent, Bonn is now seeking:

- To begin the years-long task of rebuilding its network of spies and counter-spies that has been compromised by Mr. Tiedge's knowledge of personnel lists.
- To tighten up the system of security clearance, especially the lax rechecking of

those cleared long ago but currently holding sensitive positions.

● To reassure Bonn's skeptical allies that its measures really will be effective and that West Germany can eventually escape from its reputation as a security sieve.

These are the priorities indicated by the avalanche of public and private reactions to the scandal by officials and politicians.

Commentators express varying degrees of alarm about the apparent turning of Tiedge, a 19-year veteran of highly sensitive posts in the state-security service, the *Verfassungsschutz* (literally, Protection of the Constitution), and for the last four years the director of its Section Four, responsible for counterintelligence against East German espionage. This service is junior to the *Bundesnachrichtendienst* (the West Germany equivalent of the United States Central Intelligence Agency), but the *Verfassungsschutz* counterespionage service is crucial. The rule of thumb is that some 80 percent of all spies against West Germany work for East German intelligence and must be counteracted by the *Verfassungsschutz*.

Interior Minister Friedrich Zimmermann and a crisis commission from the chancellery and the intelligence services have been in almost constant session over the weekend to "limit damage," and recommend correctives. The Cabinet will meet on Tuesday to consider changes in intelligence service leadership.

[Meanwhile, the West German prosecutor's office announced Sunday that a woman secretary in the President's office had been arrested on suspicion of spying for East Germany, Reuters reported.]

The greatest damage is universally assumed to have been done already, in the six days between Tiedge's last day at work and Friday's report by the East German news agency ADN that Tiedge is seeking asylum in East Germany.

The most sensitive of any intelligence agency's secrets are the names of its spies, and hopes are slim that West German agents in East Germany known to Tiedge can be saved. (The West German newspaper *Bild Zeitung* has reported, however, that two agents were able to flee to safety in West Berlin.) In theory espionage and counterespionage are kept compartmentalized, but investigators worry that Tiedge might have known the names of numerous West German spies in East Germany as well as his own counterspies. Beyond personnel lists, Tiedge possess invaluable knowledge of current *Verfassungsschutz* operations, logistics, strategy, and tactics, including methods of surveillance of suspected East German spies.

It is not yet clear how long Tiedge might have been reporting to the East Germans. The working hypothesis now seems to be not that he was a mole two decades ago, but rather that the alcoholism and heavy debts he fell into after the death of his wife in a bathtub accident three years ago may have pushed him to desperate measures. Some reports suggest that the number of West German agents arrested in East Germany has markedly increased in the past two years. Other reports cite a period of West German failure to expose any major East German spy network since 1979.

One of the major unanswered questions in the wake of Tiedge's flight is how his severe personal problems — a classic invitation to recruitment by a hostile intelligence agency — could have been glossed over by the security service.

Neighbors noted Tiedge's frequent drunkenness and beating of his wife and his deterioration and depression after the death of his wife; at one point, the woman who cared for his children explicitly told authorities of seeing papers marked "top secret" in his home. Yet Tiedge was kept on in what is possibly the most sensitive post in the West German government. Because of this, there is now growing pressure for the resignation of Heribert Hellenbroich, the head of the *Verfassungsschutz*.

Social Democratic members of Parliament are now calling for stricter and more frequent reviews of security clearance for those in sensitive positions. They say that reviews are conducted only once a decade or so, and are then often perfunctory out of deference to the old-boy network in the intelligence and defense communities.